

counties combined during 1994-2001 and from 1999-2001 an increase in the workforce composed of commercial fishermen occurred from 1.02% in 1999 to 1.35% in 2001. Commercial fishermen tended to earn more than the average worker during 2001 in Camden, Dare, Hyde, Pamlico, Pasquotank and Perquimans with the greatest average fishing income occurring in Camden County. Another trend that appeared is that commercial fishermen tend to have a greater average fishing income during those years in which the total weight of the harvest increased compared to the previous year (good fishing years), such as 1997, and a declining average fishing income during bad fishing years such as 1999. It is also interesting to note that commercial fishing tends to be more important in the historically important commercial fishing counties such as Dare, Hyde, Pamlico and Carteret and less important in the other coastal fishing counties.

In North Carolina, a number of studies have been conducted to examine the socioeconomic aspects of the commercial fishing-harvesting sector (Cheuvront 2002; Diaby 2000, manuscript; Johnson and Orbach 1996). Statewide, the vast majority of commercial fishermen are male (96%) and Caucasian (97%) (Johnson and Orbach 1996). Likewise, the vast majority of commercial fishermen are married (81%) and over 69% have a high school education or higher (Johnson and Orbach 1996). For the Core Sound area, Cheuvront (2002) reports similar findings to Johnson and Orbach (1996). In the Core Sound area, 98% of the commercial fishermen are male and 99% are Caucasian (Cheuvront 2002). Likewise, 77% are married and over 64% have a high school education or higher in the Core Sound area (Cheuvront 2002). In the Pamlico Sound area, Diaby (manuscript) reports that 88% of the commercial fishermen are male and 94% are Caucasian. Over 70% of the respondents were married and had a high school education or higher in the Pamlico Sound area (Diaby manuscript). In the Albemarle Sound area, Diaby (2000) reports that the vast majority (98%) of commercial fishermen are male and 93% are Caucasian. Likewise, 66% are married and over 98% had a high school education or higher in the Albemarle Sound area (Diaby 2000).

The data in this report suggest that there are several issues that may have implications on the livelihood of commercial fishermen in North Carolina. The first issue is the decline in ex-vessel value over recent years, which suggests that commercial